

One-Minute Speech

Mr. Speaker,

Debate, dissention, and protest are an important part of democracy.

Were it not for the suffragettes, women might never have gotten the right to vote.

Were it not for civil rights protestors, the full rights of citizenship might never have been extended to every American.

Protests and civil disobedience are an honored tradition in this country.

And there is nothing more pernicious than a law written to silence a particular group of people whose opinions we don't like.

From the repeal of the Alien and Sedition Acts to the censure of Senator Joe McCarthy, America has never accepted treating some people unfairly because of their beliefs.

And yet that's what some in this Congress want to do now.

The Bankruptcy bill conference report, which could come up for a vote at any time, singles out pro-life protestors for unique punishment.

Simply for holding a sign on a sidewalk, or handing out leaflets outside of an abortion clinic—these protestors could face a financial ruin for the rest of their lives.

This provision was written specifically to silence a movement.

It's a brazen attempt to intimidate loyal, God-fearing Americans into remaining silent while a million children are aborted every year.

I urge my colleagues NOT TO SUPPORT this bill, no matter how good the underlying bill is.

We should tear it up, and start over again with a clean bill.

If we do it quickly, bankruptcy reform could become law by the end of the year.

And we can do it without intimidation, and without trampling on the First Amendment.

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